

## Claims

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5 A method of sorting a group of objects in accordance with an ascending sequence or a descending sequence of order numbers which are assigned to the objects, the objects being subjected in successive sorting steps to a sorting treatment in that, depending on the sorting criterion as to whether the order number of the  
10 respective object has or would have a zero or a one in its binary representation at a point that depends on the relevant sorting step, it is allocated to a respective first storage area or a respective second storage area for sorting  
15 treatment in the next sorting step, the least significant digit of the order number in the binary representation being relevant for the sorting criterion in the first sorting step and the respective next most significant digit in the  
20 order number in the binary representation being relevant for the sorting criterion in the successive further sorting steps and, beginning at the second sorting step, either first all the objects from the respective first storage area and  
25 then the objects from the respective second storage area or first all the objects from the second storage area and then the objects from the second storage area - maintaining the relevant storage area sequence for all further sorting  
30 steps - being subjected to the sorting treatment, specifically, beginning at the latest from the third sorting step, in the sequence in which the objects were supplied to the respective storage area in the preceding sorting step.

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2. The method as claimed in claim 1, the group being subdivided in at least one preparation step into a subgroup of objects whose order number is less than a relevant predetermined number, and into a

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group of objects whose order number is equal to or greater to the predetermined number, and each subgroup being sorted as claimed in claim 1.

5 3. The method as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the subgroups are combined in order after being sorted.

10 4. ~~A sorting device for sorting objects in accordance with the method as claimed in one of the preceding claims, the sorting device being part of a conveying device, in particular a suspension conveying device, in which conveyed goods carriers are moved and guided on guide elements, in particular guide rails, along relevant conveying paths, as transport means for the objects, the sorting device comprising the following features:~~

15 ~~a first conveying path section to be used as a first destination storage area (ZS1) and a second conveying path section to be used as a second destination storage area (ZS2) for the intermediate storage of objects located on conveyed goods carriers during a respective sorting step in accordance with the sorting criterion relevant in the sorting step,~~

20 ~~a conveying path section to be used as a first source storage area (QS1) and a conveying path section to be used as a second source storage area (QS2) for providing the objects located on~~

25 ~~conveyed goods carriers for sorting treatment during a respective sorting step,~~

30 ~~at least one diverter device (W) between the source storage areas (QS1, QS2) and the destination storage areas (ZS1, ZS2),~~

35 ~~a control device (S) for controlling the supply of conveyed goods carriers with objects located on them to the diverter device (W) and for controlling the diverter position of the diverter device (W) in such a way that, during a sorting~~

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step, the objects from one of the relevant two source storage areas (QS1, QS2) and then the objects from the other source storage area are successively routed to the relevant first destination storage area (ZS1) or to the second destination storage area (ZS2) in accordance with the sorting criterion relevant in the respective sorting step,

at least one data reading device (L), provided close to the diverter device (W), for registering order numbers, preferably provided in machine-readable form on the conveyed goods carriers, of objects which are supplied to the diverter device (W), the data reading device (L) outputting order number information to the control device (S).

5. The sorting device as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that the destination storage areas (ZS1, ZS2) and the source storage areas (QS1, QS2) are provided in conveying circuits (50i, 50a) which are connected to one another via the diverter device (W).

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Add Abstract B